

SYMPATHY

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Abraham Lincoln's Personality

Sympathy

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN'S APPREHENCES

By SEATOR GILSON
1864

It has been my fortune to know Abraham Lincoln in all the walks of life—as a private citizen, as a candidate for Congress, as a statesman—and I heard a portion of his great debate with Douglas, which was the most noted discussion of political questions which ever occurred in this country, outside of the halls of Congress. I knew him as President and I was permitted to know him in the sacred precincts of his family at home. I have studied the lives of the great men of the world; and now, after nearly fifty years have passed away since his death, I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion that he was the peer, in all that makes a man great, useful and noble, of any man of any age in the world's history. His name is firmly placed by the side of Washington's—the one after a struggle founded our republic: the other after a struggle made it secure upon its foundations.

Mr. Lincoln was regarded generally as an ungainly man, and so he was; and yet on occasions he appeared to me to be superior in dignity and nobility to almost any other man whom I have ever seen. I was present when the committee from the national convention that gave him his first nomination for President came from Springfield to notify him of his nomination. I remember that he stood in the rear of the double parlor of his home, and as Hon. George F. Ashman, president of the convention, presented the delegation, one by one to him, I thought that he looked the superior man though he was to any one present. Many of the eminent men composing that delegation had believed Lincoln was some sort of a monster—a thing with horns and hoofs. I stood among them after they had met Lincoln, and heard their comments. The lofty character, the towering strength, the majesty of the man, had made a great impression upon them. They had come expecting to see a freak, but they found one of the princes of men.

In this connection, I must be permitted to refer to another occasion. It so happened that I was in Washington when the President's son, Willie, died. The funeral ceremony took place in the East Room of the White House in the presence of the President and his Cabinet and a few other friends. When the ceremony was about concluded, and President Lincoln stood by the bier of his deceased son with tear-drops falling from his face, surrounded by Seward, Chase and Bates, and others, I thought I never saw a nobler looking man. He was, at that time, truly as he appeared, a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief, possessing the power and responsibilities of a President of a great nation, yet with quivering lips and face dewed with tears.

* * *

LINCOLN'S SYMPATHY AND GOOD JUDGMENT.

At one time an officer wearing the insignia of a colonel's rank, says an exchange, came to see President Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln, as usual, was full of sympathy. He drew his chair near the colonel, desiring to know what was wanted. The man's complaint was, in brief, that he had been unjustly dismissed from the army for drunkenness while on duty.

The officer had a record for gallantry and courage. Lincoln knew him. He never forgot such a case. But the lines in the man's face told their own story of long and unrestrained indulgence. Mr. Lincoln heard the story patiently. He rose up, and, as was his habit when moved deeply, he grasped the officer's hand in both his own, and said: "Colonel, I know your story. But you carry your own condemnation in your face." The tears were in his voice, and to the officer, who walked out without a word, Lincoln appeared like a slice of judgment.

The only comment the President made subsequently was: "I dare not restore this man to his rank and give him charge of one thousand men, when he puts an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains."

*Facing Robert M. M. M. M.
July 28, 1906*

sympathetic

LINCOLN LOVED THE ENLISTED MAN

Thought More of the Ones in the
Ranks Than the Higher
Officers.

EPAULETTES PUZZLED HIM

Not Keen on the Insignia of Rank,
but He Knew Value
of Men.

* Lincoln's life was filled with striking contrasts, says James Morgan in his "Abraham Lincoln, the Boy and the Man," published by the MacMillan Company. For this careless captain of a company of unruly rustics in the Black Hawk War to become the commander-in-chief of a million soldiers, a mightier force of warriors than any conquering monarch of modern times ever assembled, was perhaps the strangest fortune that befell him. In four years he called to his command two and a half millions of men, probably a greater number than followed the eagles of Napoleon in all his twenty years of campaigning from Arcola to Waterloo.

Yet this unparalleled martial power never touched the ambition of Lincoln. He cared nothing for the pomp of arms, the pride of rank, or the glory of war. This man who could say to ten hundred thousand armed troops, go, and they would go, come, and they would come, held himself to be no more than the equal of the least among them. While he stood toward all as a comrade rather than a commander, they looked up to him in perfect trust, and delighted to hail him as Father Abraham.

Watched the Enlisted Men.

It was enough for him to touch his hat to a general, but he liked to bare his head to the boys in the ranks. He himself created generals by the hundreds, but in his eyes the private soldier was the handiwork of the Almighty. The reported capture of an officer and twelve army mules in a raid near Washington only moved him to remark, "How unfortunate! I can fill that brigadier's place in five minutes, but those mules cost us \$200 apiece." He never to the end solved the mystery of the uniforms, and could not tell a general from a colonel by his epaulettes.

The sympathy of most men who get to be Presidents, Governors or statesmen can be reached only through their heads. It becomes a thing of the mind, filtered and cooled by an intellectual process. Lincoln's sympathies always remained where nature herself placed them, in the heart, and thence they freely flowed, unhindered by reflection and calculation. Kindness with him was an impulse and not a duty. His benevolence was far from scientific, yet he was so shrewd a judge of human nature that he seldom was cheated.

Sympathy Quick and Warm.

The stone walls of the White House no more shut him in from his fellows, from the hopes and sorrows, the poverty and the pride of the plain people, than did the unbewn logs behind which he shivered and hungered in his boyhood home. A mother's tears, a baby's cry, a father's plea, an empty sleeve, or a grutch never failed to move him.

This interest on his part was no fickle, unsteady freshet of gushing sentimentality which overflowed one day and dried up the next, no alternating current of strength and weakness. Mercy flowed in a constant stream from its fountain in his great heart, nourishing the fragrant flower of charity under the withering blasts of war.

N.Y. Telegraph 2/7/19

Lincoln and His Letters

Short, terse, to the point, they are reminiscent of the days when he learned to write with charcoal on a wooden shovel

By CRISTEL HASTINGS

ON February 12, 1809, there was born in a rude wooden house, a mere shack without windows and with only the bare earth for flooring, a boy whose insatiable yearning to be able to read and write made him famous in later years for his short, terse letters, all of them worthy of preservation and frequent reading.

The picture of the boy Lincoln studying by firelight, writing his lessons on the back of a wooden shovel because there was no paper in the humble home of Nancy Hanks, his mother, who knew little or nothing of reading and writing, is familiar to every American. Also is the fact that the youthful Lincoln walked miles to borrow a book, writing his lessons with charcoal, planing off the shovel before proceeding with the next problem!

Early in life Abraham Lincoln learned the value of brevity. His meager fund of knowledge was gained through slow, painstaking processes. Charcoal and the unwieldy wooden shovel made every word count. Probably the absence of a writing pad taught him the necessity of being brief and to the point in all letters he wrote in later years, even after he became President of the United States. Lincoln's letters all were short, and all worth our reading.

FOUR of his letters especially crowd a world of wisdom, advice and consolation within the space of a few brief sentences. One of these was inscribed to a more or less shiftless brother who desired a loan, so that he could remove himself to Missouri and be a success! Shrewd as he was, Abe evidently knew what was best for his brother. He knew the latter needed, even more than money, merely a different outlook where *work* was concerned. So the shiftless one received a letter worded like this:

"What can you do in Missouri better than you can here? Is the land any richer? Can you there, any more than here, raise corn and wheat and oats without work? Will anybody there, any more than here, do your work for you? If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right here where you are; if you do not, you cannot get along anywhere."

A bit unkind, perhaps, from some points of view—but brisk and to the point. Perhaps the letter helped the brother far more than the loan of money would have aided him.

LATER, when Lincoln became a lawyer, a case was brought to him in which a man insisted a widow should pay a claim he held against her deceased husband. Lincoln's viewpoint was entirely at variance with that of his client on this question and his blunt refusal was:

"I could set a neighborhood at loggerheads, distress a widowed mother and six fatherless children, and get you the \$600, which, for all I know, she has as good a right to as you have; but I will not do it."

All through life one of Lincoln's admirable characteristics was to speak only good of his neighbor. Before he became President he was asked by a firm in New York to furnish information regarding the financial status or credit rating of an acquaintance. His reply was typical of his usual terse correspondence:

"Yours of the tenth received. First of all, he has a wife and baby; together they ought to be worth five hundred thousand dollars to any man. Secondly, he has an office in which there is a table worth a dollar and a half, and three chairs worth, say, a dollar. Last of all, there is in one corner a large rat hole, which will bear looking into."

Then there was his famous and oft-quoted letter of courage and consolation to Mrs. Bixby, who had sacrificed five sons in the cause of the Civil War:

"Dear Madam: I have been shown on the files of the War Department a statement of the adjutant general of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

"Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
"A. LINCOLN."

His simple signature carried no fancy flourishes, no effort at pretense. It was always in keeping with his letters and their substance, his own simple nature and the truth as he saw it.

Lincoln's Greatest Victory

By Cortland Myers

A telegram, which announced that Lee was about to surrender, came to the White House in Washington during the stormy days of the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln left Washington immediately to go to the front, and when news finally had reached him that Lee had surrendered and the officials began to make preparation for the entry into Richmond, just as immediately Lincoln put his foot down and said, "There shall be no triumphal entry into Richmond. There shall be no demonstration just now." He made his way to Richmond and walked through the city alone. There never was such a triumphal entry as that in all the annals of history. He walked with his head down, with heavy step and sad heart, and when he reached the Southern capital and went to Jefferson Davis's room, he bade his two officials step aside and leave him alone. After a few minutes had passed by, one of them, out of curiosity, looked to see what had taken place, and there sat Lincoln, with his head bowed on Jefferson Davis's desk, his face in his hands and his tears falling. And I say that the angels of God never looked down from the battlements of heaven on a holier scene than that. His great sympathetic heart saved the Republic. That was the greatest victory in the Civil War, that settled the struggle, that bound the North and South together, and Abraham Lincoln, like his great Master, died of a broken heart. It burst with sympathy. The greatest victory in those days of struggle was that Christ-like sympathy. The greatest victory that is ever won on any battlefield of human life, in the hour when the struggle goes on, is won through the wonderful element that comes down from the heart of Jesus Christ—his own divine sympathy for struggling humanity.

Watkins Exam 2-1-34

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S SYMPATHY FOR WIDOWS

On Thanksgiving Day, 1864, Lydia Bixby, a widow living in Boston, Massachusetts, received a letter from Abraham Lincoln, in which he expressed his sympathy for the great loss she had suffered by the gift of her sons on the field of battle. The letter, according to one British authority, is now looked upon as "the most eloquent diction extant."

When Woodrow Wilson had occasion to send a message of condolence to the mothers of the marines who died at Vera Cruz, he could think of no finer sentiment than that expressed by Lincoln in the Bixby letter; and he requested copies of this letter be forwarded as the truest expression of his feelings. Henry Watterson pronounced Lincoln's correspondence to Mrs. Bixby "the most sublime letter ever penned by the hand of man."

Executive Mansion,
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

To Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
A. Lincoln

A Widow's Last Son

A widow who may have been just as deserving of condolence as the Widow Bixby was mentioned in a note Lincoln sent to Secretary Stanton on July 15, 1862, suggesting an appointment for the woman's only remaining son. A part of the letter follows:

My dear Sir: This young man—George K. Pomeroy—is the son of one of the best women I ever knew—a widow who has lost all her other children, and has cheerfully given this one to the war, and devotes herself exclusively to nursing our sick and wounded soldiers—I wish to do something for him.

A Piteous Appeal

An old lady, presumably a widow, came to Lincoln on the last day of the old year, 1862, with a grievance against the government. While any one of many other officials might have handled the case, somehow she was allowed to make a direct appeal to the President. His note to Stanton tells the story:

Dear Sir: Yesterday a piteous appeal was made to me by an old lady of genteel appearance, saying she had, with what she thought sufficient assurance that she would not be disturbed by the government, fitted up the two south divisions of the old "Duff Green" building in order to take boarders, and has boarders already in it, and others, including members of Congress, engaged; and that now she is ordered to be out of it by Saturday, the 3d instant; and that independently of the ruin it brings on her by her lost outlay, she neither has nor can find another shelter for her own head. I know nothing about it myself, but promised to bring it to your notice.

Weeping Widows

On one occasion there was a large number of deserters sentenced to be shot and the warrants for their execution

were sent to Mr. Lincoln for his approval. Upon his refusal to sign the warrants he was approached by a military officer and criticized for his refusing to support military discipline. After Lincoln heard the general through, he replied, "There are too many weeping widows in the United States now. For God's sake, don't ask me to add to their number; for I tell you I won't do it."

Patronage for Widows

There was called to Lincoln's attention on July 24, 1863, two cases where widows of fallen soldiers were seeking postmasterships. His reaction to these appeals is found in a memorandum to Postmaster General Blair:

Sir: Yesterday little indorsements of mine went to you in two cases of postmasterships sought for widows whose husbands have fallen in the battles of this war. These cases occurring on the same day brought me to reflect more attentively than I had before done, as to what is fairly due from us here in the dispensing of patronage toward the men who, by fighting our battles, bear the chief burden of saving our country. My conclusion is that, other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the better right; and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldier and the deceased soldier's family.

A Widow's Son Cleared

There are many instances where Lincoln as a lawyer befriended widows. Possibly the best-known incident was his coming to the rescue of the Widow Armstrong's son "Duff" whom he cleared of the charge of murder. His letter to Hannah Armstrong follows:

Dear Mrs. Armstrong: I have just heard of your deep affliction, and the arrest of your son for murder. I can hardly believe that he can be capable of the crime alleged against him. It does not seem possible. I am anxious that he should be given a fair trial at any rate; and gratitude for your long-continued kindness to me in adverse circumstances prompts me to offer my humble services gratuitously in his behalf.

It will afford me an opportunity to requite, in a small degree, the favors I received at your hand, and that of your lamented husband, when your roof afforded me a grateful shelter, without money and without price.

Mother of Six Fatherless Children

A prospective client once presented a situation to Lincoln in which he hoped to recover a sum of money which he alleged was due him by the widow of a man against whom he had a claim. This was Lincoln's reply in part: "I could set a neighborhood at logger heads, distress a widowed mother and six fatherless children and get you the \$800, which, for all I know, she has as good a right to as you have; but I will not do it."

Lincoln's Widowed Stepmother

After the death of his father, Abraham Lincoln became the guardian, so to speak, of his stepmother whose own son was endeavoring to get possession of her property. He wrote:

Dear Brother:

Your proposal about selling the east forty acres of land is all that I want or could claim for myself; but I am not satisfied with it on mother's account. I want her to have her living, and I feel that it is my duty, to some extent, to see that she is not wronged You propose to sell it for three hundred dollars, take one hundred away with you, and leave her two hundred at 8 per cent, making her the enormous sum of 16 dollars a year. Now, if you are satisfied with treating her in that way, I am not. It is true, that you are to have that forty for two hundred dollars, at mother's death; but you are not to have it before.

Lincoln Had Faith in Plain People

By ALLAN NEVINS

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It is 150 years since Abraham Lincoln opened his eyes in a one-windowed, dirt-floored cabin near Hodgenville, Ky.; it is almost 94 years since Stanton broke the hush at his deathbed with the words, "Now he belongs to the ages."

No statesman ever grew more sturdily than Lincoln grew between 1854 and 1865: Grew from a prairie politician to be the beneficent dictator of a great nation in its most terrible crisis. No leader of modern times has grown more steadily in fame and world-wide influence since his death.

He is like the mountain peak that at near view seemed little more than equal with its fellows, but that as we recede and gain perspective rises higher and higher above their level.

THE SELF-TAUGHT RAILSPLITTER reached Washington relatively unknown and untested. He died so trusted that the once-skeptical New York diarist G. T. Strong wrote: "No prince, no leader of a people, was ever so lamented. . . His name is faithful and true. He will stand in history beside Washington, perhaps higher."

What is the deeper secret of the hold this son of the prairies has taken on the imagination of the world? More books, foreign and domestic, are written on him than on any other civil ruler of the past.

We would look in vain for the explanation merely in his principal public acts. He was the Great Emancipator, but he was a reluctant emancipator, who for all his intense desire to free the slaves would have preferred gradual compensated emancipation to an abrupt liberation.

He was an unmatched war leader, but never a highly efficient administrator; two other wartime presidents, Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, showed more skill in organizing the energies of the nation.

HE WAS A FARSIGHTED NATIONAL CHIEFTAIN, but never an astute planner with the manysided talents of a Theodore Roosevelt.

The secret of the enduring hold Abraham Lincoln has had on men's hearts and opinions is explored here by a noted American historian, twice a Pulitzer Prize winner.

We reach a partial understanding of his grip on succeeding generations when we turn from his acts to examine two underlying traits, his sagacity and his magnanimity.

The sagacity with which he was always correctly credited did not lie in a simple grasp of what was expedient. It lay in his ability to pierce to the heart of a complex problem, where right and wrong seem inextricably mingled, with unerring logic.

The supreme illustration of this wisdom is offered by his proposal for meeting the terrible national disease of slavery and sectional friction. From 1854 onward he preached that the nation could not endure half slave and half free; that a crisis must be reached and passed before it could be safe. He was our first statesman to define that crisis without evasion.

A young Frenchman, the Marquis de Chambrun, who was sometimes at the White House in 1865, tells us that whenever Lincoln heard men talk about putting the conquered South under iron controls, he exhibited an unconcealable "fatigue and weariness."

In the last weeks of the war, when the foe was plainly vanquished, he proposed to his cabinet a plan for giving the South, if it stopped fighting at once, a general amnesty, a release of all confiscated property, and a grant of 400 million dollars toward regaining its feet.

When he heard from Grant at the time of Lee's surrender that Union troops might capture Jefferson Davis, a radical Northerner exclaimed, "He must be hanged." But Lincoln replied with a free quotation from the Bible: "Judge not, that we be not judged."

LINCOLN'S GREATEST QUALITIES, however, lay deeper than sagacity and magnanimity. One was his passionate faith in the virtue and strength of the plain people.

God must have loved them, he said, or he would never have made so many of them; you could never fool all of the people all of the time; government of, by, and for the people was not only the best government but the hope of the world.

As an expounder of democracy he had the same fervent faith as a poet he loved, Robert Burns.

Out of his passionate regard for common folk came his unerring instinct for popular sentiment; he knew just how far and fast he could go in leading the country without losing touch with the majority.

AND OUT OF HIS DEEP FEELING for popular government was born Lincoln's crowning quality: His vision of the larger meaning of the grim struggle he had to conduct. It was not just a war to determine whether the Union should survive or perish.

He knew that the adventure of mankind has but begun, and that the course chosen by a continental power like the United States must have its influence on the long ages to come.

This conviction, expressed with his memorable eloquence, gave the struggle a spiritual significance, and made victory for union and freedom seem the opening of gates on a better world.

Five years after the Gettysburg Address the British parliament passed its new reform bill, partly because American Democracy had vindicated itself. Seven years after the Address, France erected the Third Republic, partly because the American Republic had survived its ordeal.

The truest tribute the American people can pay Lincoln on every celebration of his birthday is to try to share his earnest conviction that the Republic has a great world destiny; that in every crisis men must do their duty not for the country alone but for all countries, and not for the hour only, but for the long generations ahead.

Supplement
MR. LINCOLN'S KIND-HEARTEDNESS. — A correspondent referring to the second capture by the rebels of Benjamin Shultz, a member of the eighth New Jersey Regiment, mentions the following: —

An incident connected with Mr. Shultz illustrates the kind-heartedness of Mr. Lincoln. On his return from his former imprisonment, on parole, young Shultz was sent to Camp Parole, at Alexandria. Having had no furlough since the war, efforts were made, without success, to get him liberty to pay a brief visit to his friends; but having faith in the warm-heartedness of the President, the young soldier's widowed mother wrote to Mr. Lincoln, stating that he had been in nearly every battle fought by the Army of the Potomac, had never asked a furlough; was now a paroled prisoner, and in consequence unable to perform active duties; that two of his brothers had also served in the army, and asking that he be allowed to visit home, that she might see him once more. Her trust in the President was not unfounded. He immediately caused a furlough to be granted to her son, who, shortly before he was exchanged, visited his family to their great surprise and joy. *more* p 165

Lincoln's Tenderness of Heart

HERE is an incident related by Speed: "Lincoln had the tenderest heart for anyone in distress, whether man, beast or bird. Many of the gentle and touching sympathies of his nature, which flowered so frequently and beautifully in the humble citizen at home, fruited in the sunlight of the world when he had place and power. He carried from his home on the prairie, to Washington the same gentleness of disposition and kindness of heart. Six gentlemen, Hemgone, Lincoln, Baker, Hardin, and two others whose names I do not now recall, were riding along a country road. We were strung along the road two and two together. We were passing through a thicket of wild plum and apple trees. A violent wind-storm had just occurred. Lincoln and Hardin were behind. There were two young birds on the roadside too young to fly. They had been blown from the nest by the storm. The old bird was fluttering about and wailing as a mother ever does for her babes. Lincoln stopped, hitched his horse, caught the birds, hunted the nest, and placed them in it. The rest of us rode on to a creek, and while our horses were drinking, Hardin rode up. 'Where is Lincoln?' asked one. 'Oh, when I saw him last he had two little birds in his hand hunting for their nest.' In an hour perhaps he came. They laughed at him. He said with much emphasis: 'Gentlemen, you may laugh, but I could not have slept well to-night if I had not saved

those birds. Their cries would have rung in my ears.'"—Our Dumb Animals.

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LINCOLN AND THE KITTENS.

(From Munford's Magazine.)

President Lincoln was as sensitive to external impressions as the test paper of the chemist. The results of a battle pained him as though he himself were among the wounded or had lost a brave son. This sympathy—that is, his power of putting himself in another's place—extended, even to animals.

The day on which Grant's army began the final advance the president sat in a small telegraph office at City Point, receiving telegrams and examining a pocket chart. Three little kittens were running about the hut, in which was the office. The president of the nation, whose fate was in the scales, picked up the kittens, placed them on the table, and said:

"You poor little miserable creatures, what brought you in this camp of warriors? Where is your mother?"

"The mother is dead," answered the colonel in charge.

"Then she can't grieve for them," said the president, with a sigh, "as many a poor mother is grieving for the son who has fallen in battle. Ah, kitties, thank God you are cats, and can't understand this terrible strife.

"There, now go, my little friends," wiping the dirt from their eyes with his handkerchief; "that is all I can do for you, Colonel, get them good milk and don't let them starve. There is too much starvation going on in this land, anyhow. Let us mitigate it when we can."

The great president, even at such a crisis, could, as Admiral Porter says, "find time to look at God's creatures, and be solicitous for their comfort."

XLVIII.—THE GREAT FRIEND

THE stone walls of the White House no more shut Lincoln in from his fellows, from their hopes and sorrows and pride, than did the unhewn logs behind which he shivered in the cabin home of his youth. One night he dreamed that he was in a crowd, when some one recognized him as the president, and exclaimed in surprise, "He is a very common looking man." Whereupon he answered, "Friend, the Lord prefers common looking people. That is the reason he makes so many of them."

Lincoln liked people, and he always kept in touch with the mass. He did not have to take the word of politicians or newspapers about what the country was thinking. He went to the source. In truth, he needed only to look within himself to find a mirror of the popular mind.

As he finished his daily wrestle with senators and the bi-wigs, he plunged with zest into what he called his "public opinion bath." Seated in his chair, with one leg thrown over its arm, he received the motley crowd that poured in thru the wide open door of his office. Those who approached him in awe found themselves at ease in the presence of a friend, whose manner said to every one what he said in a speech to a regiment: "I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am—a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has."

The man fairly exhaled democracy, fraternity, equality. Frederick Douglass said that Lincoln was the only white man he ever met who did not show consciously or unconsciously that he recognized his color.

Sympathy flowed in a constant stream from its fountain in this great heart. A mother's tears, a baby's cry, a father's plea, a crutch or an empty sleeve never failed to move Lincoln. "If he has no friend, I'll be his friend," he said as he stopped the shooting of a soldier, under sentence of a court-martial.

"My poor girl," he said to a woman who pleaded for the life of her soldier brother, "you have come here with no governor or senator or member of congress to speak in your cause; you seem honest and truthful and you don't wear hoops, and I'll be whipped if I don't pardon him."

He hated Friday—"butcher's day," as he called it—because that was the usual time appointed for carrying out death sentences in the army. "They are shooting a boy today. I hope I have not done wrong to allow it." "There are already too many weeping widows; don't ask me to add one to the number." On one pardon he wrote, "I think this boy can do us more good



LINCOLN AND TAD.

above ground than under it." And here is another characteristic message: "If you have not shot Denis McCarthy, don't."

Even the coward had a friend in this brave man. "If God Almighty gives a man a cowardly pair of legs, how can he help their running away with him?" A pigeon hole in his desk was stuffed with these "leg eases," as he labeled them.

A soldier, whom he had spared a dishonorable death before the firing squad, was found dead on a battlefield, and in his pocket was a photograph of his deliverer, inscribed "God bless President Lincoln." Like this is the oft-story of the sleeping sentinel. Lincoln went personally to see and to pardon that Vermont boy, who repaid him in his first battle by swimming a river under fire again and again to carry the wounded to safety until he had given his life for his comrades.

This native democrat never put on presidential manners. He did not need them. His inborn dignity protected them. "Good morning," he surprised a passerby at the White House gate at 6 o'clock. "I am looking for a news-boy. When you get to the corner I wish you would send one up this way."

The hard muscles and steel nerves of the railsplitter enabled this president to bear responsibilities, labors and annoyances such as would have broken perhaps any other man in the presidential line. He still could grip an ax by the end of the handle and hold it out even with his shoulders.

His sense of humor was his safety valve. "If I couldn't tell these stories I should die," he explained to a solemn congressman who impatiently protested that he had not come to the White House to hear jokes.

The man who kept all great decisions to himself could not enjoy a little joke alone. See him stalking the White House corridor in night shirt and bare legs to read to young Nicholas and Hay, his secretaries, a punning conceit from Theodore Hook, "unconscious that he * * * was infinitely funnier," said John Hay. Here's another snap shot from Hay: "He read Shakespeare to me, the end of 'Henry VIII,' and the beginning of 'Richard III,' till my heavy eyelids caught his considerate notice and he sent me to bed."

Lincoln's office was almost his prison cell thru four terrible years. The shouts of his two little boys at play always were welcome notes of joy to their care-weighted father. He never objected to their noisy bursting in upon him, and often he joined the children in their boisterous games in the White House grounds.

In the dark days when the nation itself was at death's door, one of the boys died. For weeks the grieving father strove in vain to win a spirit of resignation, dropping his work for a day at a time and surrendering to his sorrow. Doubtless the fortitude he gained at last in that wrestle with himself became part of the heroic faith which lifted him above the gen-

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**LINCOLN'S RECREATION
WHILE PRESIDENT**

Some months ago Mrs. Anna M. Marcotte said in an address that Lincoln seemed to take his recreation by jumping on his horse and riding to a hospital to try to cheer up some dying man. "Lincoln was always intensely sympathetic," she said, "and I don't think people remember that as they should. I saw him several times at hospitals and at funerals, with tears streaming down his face."

Mrs. Marcotte's husband was killed in battle, and she got a position in the Treasury Department at Washington. Morning after morning she met Lincoln in his long, plaid-lined overcoat as she went to work. After the third or fourth morning he smiled at her: later he spoke, exclaiming, after reports had been received of one of the battles: "Our poor, poor boys!"

Mrs. Marcotte also told of an orderly who had boarded in the same house that she had. He was in the hospital. She went to see him. When she got there, he was dying. And there was President Lincoln sitting

by the bed, holding the young fellow's hand.

Such was the greatheartedness of the noble Lincoln.—Edwin D. Snyder, in *Sunday School Messenger*.

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Pay and Poor Families

The widowed mother of two children visited Washington, D. C., in August, 1862, and gained an audience with Lincoln which resulted in his making these recommendations in a note to Stanton:

"Mrs. Baird tells me that she is a widow; that her two sons and only support joined the army where one of them still is; that her other son is now under guard with his regiment on charge of desertion.....Let him be discharged from arrest and go to duty. I think he should have his pay too for duties actually performed. Loss of pay falls so hard upon poor families."

